

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 122991

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 122991

FOLLOWING TEL SENT SECSTATE INFO LONDON CINCPAC COMIDEASTFOR
BOMBAY BY POUCH CALCUTTA BY POUCH MADRAS BY POUCH FROM
NEW DELHI 22 JUNE REPEATED

QTE NEW DELHI 7370

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, XO, IN

SUBJECT: DIEGO GARCIA; INDIAN- US RELATIONS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

BEGIN SUMMARY: MEA ADDITIONAL SECRETARY RAHMAN INQUIRED OF
CHARGE ON JUNE 22 ABOUT THE LATEST PRESS STORIES ON DIEGO
GARCIA AND SAID HE PRESUMED THAT IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS IN
THE COMING SESSION OF PARLIAMENT THE GOI WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT
THIS SUBJECT HAD BEEN RAISED WITH US, THAT THE GOI CONSIDERED
THE US PRESENCE ON DIEGO WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO TENSIONS IN AREA,
AND THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE TAKEN UP IN THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
ESTABLISHED UNDER INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE RESOLUTION. CHARGE
STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT GOI NOT PLAY UP ISYBE AND EMPHASIZED
POTENTIAL EFFECT OF PUBLIC CRITICISM UPON CLIMATE OF US- INDIA
RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF RECENT SUCCESS BY BOTH
GOVERNMENTS
AT RESTRAINING SUCH CRITICISM. RAHMAN ALSO REFERRED TO MATTERS
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PAGE 02 STATE 122991

OF " VITAL" INDIAN INTERESTS, SUCH AS ARMS TO IRAN, AND SAID THAT GOI WAS AWAITING REPLY TO ITS QUERY ON THIS QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. KEEPING HIS PRESENTATION CONSISTENTLY IN LOW KEY, RAHMAN RAISED DIEGO GARCIA DURING COURSE OF COURTESYCALL BY CHARGE. HE FIRST ASKED WHAT EXACTLY WAS HAPPENING IN REGARD TO DIEGO. CHARGE REPLIED THAT NOTHING MORE WAS HAPPENING THAN THE US HAS ALREADY TOLD GOI WAS TO HAPPEN. CHARGE THEN REVIEWED NATURE AND PURPOSES OF LIMITED US COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY WHICH WAS BEING ESTABLISHED ON ISLAND. (STATE 192354, OCTOBER 21, 1972) RAHMAN AGREED HE HAD BEEN AWARE OF THIS AND SAID HE PRESUMED FACILITY HAD REACHED ACTIVATION STAGE, WHATEVER THAT WAS. CHARGE PRESUMED THAT WAS SO. RAHMAN ASKED WHAT GOI SHOULD SAY IN RESPONSE TO ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS WHEN PARLIAMENT CONVENED NEXT MONTH. CHARGE REPLIED THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE NO REASON TO SAY ANY MORE THAN HAD BEEN SAID PREVIOUSLY, SINCE SITUATION WAS THE SAME. RAHMAN THEN SAID THAT HE BELIEVED GOI WOULD HAVE TO MAKE COMMENTS ABOUT TENSIONS AND AD HOC COMMITTEE.

2. CHARGE THEN INDICATED HARMFUL EFFECT WHICH UNNECESSARY CRITICISM MIGHT HAVE ON US- INDIA RELATIONS AND REVIEWED AT SOME LENGTH JOINT EFFORTS BY GOI AND US TO LIMIT SUCH PUBLIC COMMENT SO THAT BOTH COUNTRIES COULD MOVE FORWARD TO BUILD NEW MORE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP. NOTED THAT THESE EFFORTS HAD HAD SOME RECENT SUCCESS AND SAID THAT US HOPED THIS WOULD PROVIDE IMPROVED CLIMATE FOR DISCUSSIONS, SUCH AS THOSE SUGGESTED AT PARIS CONSORTIUM MEETING, DESIGNED TO BUILD MORE REALISTIC RELATIONS. RAHMAN SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND BUT WITHHELD COMMENT ON HOW THIS MIGHT AFFECT INDIAN PUBLIC POSITION ON DIEGO GARCIA.

3. AT THAT POINT RAHMAN MADE REMARK WHICH IMPLIED THAT THERE MIGHT BE DIFFERENCE IN MANNER IN WHICH DIFFERENCES IN AREA OF VITAL INTEREST MIGHT BE HANDLED. HE MENTIONED ARMS TO IRAN ISSUE AND SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT AN AREA IN WHICH HE HAD DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE GOI WAS AWAITING A REPLY FROM THE US TO THE QUESTION IT HAS PUT TO THE US ON THIS. HE SAID THAT RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION MAY HAVE AN IMPORTANT EFFECT ON US- INDIA RELATIONS. CHARGE REFRAINED FROM GOING BEYOND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF KAUL'S REQUEST TO THE SECRETARY, BUT EMPHASIZED DESIRABILITY THAT DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE

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PAGE 03 STATE 122991

ON SUCH MATTERS ALSO BE CONDUCTED PRIVATELY AND FRANKLY.

4. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL COUNSELOR, UK HIGH COMMISSION HEAD OF CHANCERY (MILLS) SAID GOI HAD NOT RAISED DIEGO GARCIA WITH THEM, BUT HIGH COMMISSIONER HAD SUGGESTED TO

LONDON THAT PM HEATH BE PREPARED WITH BRIEF IN EVENT PM GANDHI
TOUCHES ON SUBJECT IN PASSING THROUGH LONDON JUNE 24 OR 25.

5. FOR LONDON: EMBASSY MAY WISH BRIEF MINISTRY ON CONVERSATION
HERE PRIOR MRS. GANDHI'S PASSAGE THROUGH LONDON.
SCHNEIDER UNQTE
RUSH

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